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Peru May Break Diplomatic Relations With Cuba

Peruvian President Prado told the American chargé d'affaires that he is ready to break relations with Cuba on the grounds of a letter from the head of the Peruvian Communist party to the Cuban ambassador in Lima thanking him for a contribution to the party and expressing appreciation for sending party members to Cuba for training. Prado said he does not mind taking the lead at this time in breaking relations, but hopes Argentina, Colombia, and certain Central American governments will follow suit so that Peru will not be a particular target for Cuba and the USSR.

The Peruvian Government's antagonism for Cuba has been heightened over the past year by the frequent alliance within Peru of the Communists, an influential pro-Castro group, and the reactionary wing of Peru's oligarchy. This alliance has intensified agitation on emotional issues--such as those involving US petroleum investment or the Peruvian-Ecuadorean boundary dispute--in an apparent effort to stalemate the government's economic development efforts.

The Argentine Government apparently believes that Cuba is seeking to provoke a break in relations but that such a break now would be counterproductive for Argentina's ambition to increase its influence in Latin America, and would mean the loss of valuable information derived from the long-standing friendship between Argentine Ambassador Amoedo and Fidel Castro. Colombia requested the withdrawal of the Cuban ambassador last month, and its interest in breaking relations with Cuba would probably be reawakened by a Peruvian initiative.

Guatemala and Nicaragua broke relations with Cuba earlier this year. El Salvador, which now is emerging from a serious political crisis complicated by pro-Castro manifestations, may soon follow suit. The Panamanian Government reportedly may declare the Cuban ambassador persona non grata, although Panamanian President Chiari is facing serious domestic difficulties which would probably be complicated by such a step.

